NARROWING THE AWARENESS-ACTION GAP: CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF ROUTINE ALL-HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES

MAKING “FIRE-FITNESS” A SOCIAL NORM

Rachel Westcott
Western Sydney University and BNHCRC (South Australia)
WHY ARE WE INTERESTED IN?

- Preparedness is *generally* suboptimal
- Prepared community (society) is a stronger and safer community
- Good preparedness → good DRR
- How is preparedness communicated
- New and/or different ways to make it better
THERE ARE A FEW GIVENS WHICH DON’T NEED ELABORATION

- Climate change
- New normal of extreme weather
- Sendai Framework For Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030
- Natural hazards are *non-routine social problems* (Drabek 2004)
- Improve human safety and well being - implicit in that is non-human and environmental safety & well being because that impacts directly on people...*One Health, One Welfare*
- Achieving good preparedness is a multi-faceted exercise
- No one-size-fits-all
- Less costly than Response, Relief and Recovery
- Other advantages to being a well prepared society
GENEVA, 27 April 2017 - Australia estimates that its annual economic losses from disasters will **triple** to US$17.7 billion by 2050.

https://www.unisdr.org/archive/52874
The CART BEFORE THE HORSE Syndrome?
See my blog post on the UNISDR DRR Voices blog page: (details in handout)

http://www.preventionweb.net/experts/oped/view/54363

What Comes First? Building DRR By Cultivating A Preceding Culture Of Preparedness As A ‘Social Norm’
Inherent conservatism –
Don’t frighten the horses!

Innovative public policy has to overcome conservative public policy and bureaucracy, policy makers, government & a culture of consumerism
TO REITERATE THE PROBLEM

• Uptake of preparedness behaviour is generally (still) low
• Preparedness is a PUBLIC HEALTH issue
• Barriers to achieving good preparedness:
  too hard, too big, too $$, too time-consuming
  I don’t know where to start
  I don’t know how to get help
  It won’t happen to me
  I know I should get around to it
• ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL
CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

Make preparedness ROUTINE - as routine as putting fuel in the car or buying the groceries

PREPAREDNESS therefore becomes a SOCIAL NORM
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CATASTROPHIC DAY LEAVE

**Formal workplace agreement** between employer/employee

- “Trade” other leave or entitlements (e.g. recreation leave, overtime, Time-Off-In-Lieu (TOIL) days, Flex days
- Written into individual employee contracts
- Moves **preparedness** into the day-to-day **public realm**
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Discounts on council rates or insurance policies for attending fire safe seminars

Awards and public recognition – “Bushfire Best Prepared”

Value adding for the sale of compliant properties
FARMING PRACTICES

Review the use of firebreaks & spraying fence lines
- a by-law??
- something to burn back to
- trials of chemical firebreaks

Conservation farming is a good thing
• no-till, no burn, retain soil organic matter
• greater crop density and productivity

Crop & fuel types – oilseed vs cereal vs grass
MEDIUM - LONG term changes to public health & safety policy

- Catastrophic Day Leave - optional but FORMAL workplace leave
- Give new people easily accessible fire safety information and reward them for joining in.
- Publicly acknowledge best practice.
- Give farmers incentive to put in firebreaks, and think about crop placement.

New, straightforward public policy, can help achieve this so that effective fire-fitness becomes just another part of daily life.
My name is Rachel Westcott

@rachelwestcott

R.Westcott@westernsydney.edu.au

ptlincolnproject.wordpress.com


Details in the handout
Some PhD Publications 2017


UNISDR Prevention Web *DRR Voices* blog
http://www.preventionweb.net/experts/oped/view/54363
What comes first? Building DRR by cultivating a preceding culture of preparedness as a ‘social norm’. 